

# Did you know?

- The typical Canadian home has enough drafty leaks and holes to be the equivalent of having a window-sized hole in your wall.
- If all of Ontario's homeowners reduced their energy use by 20%, the province wide savings would be enough to heat the homes of two million people each year.
- A leaky 4.5 litre can of oil-based paint can release 1 kilogram of volatile organic compounds into the air by the time it dries up.
- A poorly maintained gas-power mower operated for 20 hours a year produces the same amount of smog-forming volatile organic compound pollution as a 1996 passenger car driven for 40,000 kilometres – more than most people drive in a year.

If you want to know more about the effects of air pollution on the environment and human health, the Waterfront Regeneration Trust has produced a poster entitled "**Our Air, Our Water, Ourselves**", with support from Environment Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Environment and Energy.

## For more information contact:

The Waterfront Regeneration Trust

207 Queen's Quay West, Suite 580

Toronto, Ontario M5J 1A7

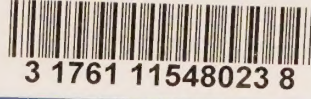
Phone 416-314-9490 Fax 416-314-9497

email [info@wrttrust.com](mailto:info@wrttrust.com)

Web page [www.waterfronttrust.com](http://www.waterfronttrust.com)

<sup>1</sup>Public Acceptance Working Group. Smog Plan Partnership. June 1997. Delphi Group

"Living Lighter" images courtesy of the Toronto Environmental Alliance



## ACTIONS WE CAN TAKE DIFFERENCES WE CAN MAKE

("Actions" continued)

### TURN OFF

**Always remember** It may seem obvious, but we often forget to do the little energy saving activities around the home such as turning off our lights and entertainment systems (e.g., stereo, TV., radio, computer) when not in use. While not big energy consumers on their own, the combined effect of thousands of homes being a little bit forgetful really adds up.

### CLEAN UP

Many of the products we use to keep our home "squeaky clean" (e.g., cleaners, polishes, air fresheners,) contain toxics that pollute as much as they clean.

### Here are four key steps to cleaning green:

**Look before you buy** Know what you are using and if necessary choose safer alternatives (e.g., baking soda, vinegar, lemon juice, borax, ammonia), and purchase only what you need. For information on hazardous products in the home contact your local municipality. In Metro Toronto call Metro's Household Hazardous Waste Hotline at 416-392-4330.

**Double Up** Only use one product for many of the cleaning jobs in and around your home (e.g., vinegar to wash windows, disinfect toilets and clean counter-tops).

**Use with Care** If you need to use a hazardous product (e.g., pesticides, oven cleaner) wear protective clothing such as gloves, mask, and goggles. Ventilate by opening a window, and store the remainder away from the living areas. Remember, never mix cleaners, they can combine to produce toxic by-products such as chlorine gas.

**Dispose** When finished using hazardous products (e.g., solvents, cleaners, paints, pesticides), contact your local municipality about proper disposal. In Toronto you can contact the Metro Toxic Taxi Service at 416-392-4330 for collection of your hazardous waste. Do not pour hazardous waste down the drain or place it in the garbage.

## ACTIONS WE CAN TAKE DIFFERENCES WE CAN MAKE

**Home Care** Most of the products used to maintain our home's exterior (e.g., paint, glues, caulking), release pollutants into the air and water. Whenever possible, use low-emission or water-based products. The EcoLogo can be a useful guide to identifying such products.



### GARDENING GREEN

Trees and other plants are the lungs of the planet. Greening around the home can help improve air quality but some methods we use can also pollute the air, the water and ultimately, ourselves. **Green gardening means:**

**Use Push Power** Whenever practical avoid using garden tools that run on gasoline (e.g., lawnmowers, weed trimmers and leaf blowers) – they pollute. The best options are push mowers, hand-clippers, brooms or, if necessary, electrically-powered gardening equipment.

**Be Chemical Free** Don't let chemicals rule your garden. Most are applied by spraying and can end up in your lungs and run off your lawns into surface water, affecting drinking water, and wildlife and fish habitats. Ask about alternative, non-toxic methods at your local hardware store or garden nursery centre.

**Let your Grass Grow** Raising your lawn to three inches will help shade out weeds – saving you from buying and using pesticides.

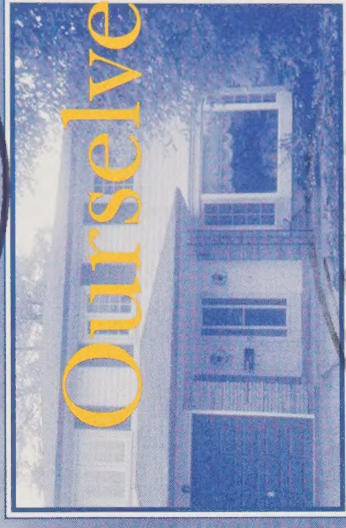
**Make Variety the Spice of Life** Using a diversity of native plants (e.g., asters, black-eyed susans, coneflowers) will add colour to your garden and reduce the need for water and fertilizers.

### MAKING THE CHANGE

Living lighter is acting with the environment in mind, and using your home as a place of change. It means taking a number of small actions that, when done collectively, make a difference. Whether it's planting a tree, turning down the thermostat or switching to non-toxic products – each will help you reach the 20% goal.

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# Our air



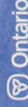
# Ourselves

# Our water

In and Around the Home  
A Place of Change



Environment  
Canada



Ministry of Environment and Energy



Waterfront  
Regeneration  
Trust



# Living Lighter

WE LIKE TO THINK of our homes as places of safety, comfort, and protection from the elements. Yet the truth is that many of our actions and decisions can create unhealthy air both inside and outside the home.

The choices we make in and around our home are responsible for about 40% of the pollution that enters the air<sup>1</sup>. Common sources include: the energy used to heat or cool our homes, the products used to maintain our homes, and our transportation choices. While it's impossible to eliminate all the sources of pollution – it is possible to significantly reduce them. Living lighter means reducing the impact of pollution on our air, our water, and ourselves.

We can all contribute to healthy air by making better choices – starting with the products we use and the energy we consume. Increasingly, cities, corporations, and individuals are making commitments to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide, toxics, and other pollutants that create smog, by at least 20%. It's a real and achievable goal that has measurable environmental, human health, and financial benefits.

## Getting Started

The path to living lighter begins with thinking of your home as a place of change. It's about ensuring that the decisions you make and the actions you take have a positive effect on your health and the environment.

*Here's why:*

### ENERGY WE USE

Much of our energy comes from the burning of fossil fuels – oil, coal and

gas – that create air and water pollution. Homes are the third largest consumer of energy, after industry and transportation. A small investment in no cost and low cost actions, such as turning off the lights, planting a tree, or installing a programmable thermostat, can deliver real improvements to the environment and your pocketbook through energy conservation.

### MEASURING THE CHANGE

Tracking the cost on your monthly utility bills (hydro, gas, and oil), and the waste you throw away, are two simple measures for your progress toward 20%. To get started, look for a reduction in your monthly utility bills – for the same period last year – and the number and type of containers going to the hazardous waste depot, the garbage or blue box.



(e.g., pesticides, cleaners, air fresheners) and using safer alternatives, we create a healthier local environment and reduce persistent toxics that cycle through the ecosystem.

### SYSTEMS WE MAINTAIN

Poorly maintained home systems like our water heater, furnace, electrical appliances, and small engines, pollute more, are less energy efficient, and need to be replaced more frequently. Regular maintenance is a preventative approach that reduces our home's impact on the environment and saves you money.

## ACTIONS WE CAN TAKE DIFFERENCES WE CAN MAKE

To start living lighter, look at the energy you use, the products you buy, and the choices you make. Here are some ways you can make your home a place of change.

### TUNE IN

**Get informed** It's the first step to understanding how you can improve air quality. Here are just a few informed sources who'd be happy to get you started, all you need to do is call: GreenSaver 416-461-9540, The Lung Association 1-800-972-2636, Metro Works 416-392-4330, Pollution Probe 416-926-1907, Ministry of Environment and Energy Public Information Centre 1-800-565-4923 and Environment Canada Information 416-739-4826.

### TURN DOWN

**Setback** If you're going to bed or leaving the house, turning down your thermostat by 5°C in the winter can reduce your home's energy demand by up to 14%.

**Cover Up** Heating your water is the second largest use of energy in the home. Insulating your hot water heater and pipes lowers the amount of energy required to heat water. Contact your local municipality or utility company for advice on insulation and for other energy saving tips.

**Get Caulky** Taking the time to properly caulk and seal your home can save as much as 25% on your heating bill. Whenever possible, use latex-based caulking to reduce the need for polluting solvents. For an energy audit contact GreenSaver at 416-461-9540.

**Branch Out** Planting a few trees in the right places around your home can save you 10 - 30% on summer cooling costs, plus a further savings of 15% or more in winter. In Toronto, home owners can have a free tree planted by contacting Greenest City at 416-977-7626.

**Cut down** While comforting on cold winter nights, fireplaces can be a source of indoor and outdoor air pollution, as well as heat loss. During use, as much as 10% of your home's heat can be sucked up the chimney. Consider using the fireplace less – say 20% less – or invest in an energy efficient fireplace insert.

*("Actions We Can Take" continues on reverse side)*